

VZCZCXRO3852
PP RUEHPA
DE RUEHDK #0619/01 0681650
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 091650Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4532
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAN/AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO 0273

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DAKAR 000619

SIPDIS

SIPDIS
SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/W, AF/SPG, AF/RSA, IO/UNP AND INR/AA
ABIDJAN FOR REGIONAL REFUGEE COORDINATOR
ACCRA FOR REGIONAL REFUGEE COORDINATOR
PARIS FOR POL - D'ELIA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [KFLU](#) [KUNR](#) [KPAL](#) [CN](#) [IZ](#) [MR](#) [SU](#) [SG](#)
SUBJECT: ELY OULD VALL: "MAURITANIA HAS NO REFUGEES IN
SENEGAL"

REF: A. NOUAKCHOTT 0279 (NOTAL)

[1](#)B. NOUAKCHOTT 0087 (NOTAL)

[1](#)C. DAKAR 0249 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (U) Mauritania's Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall made his first visit to Senegal as head of state, March 6-7, [1](#)2006. In a press conference shortly before departure, he said use of the term "refugee" is inappropriate for those who left Maritania in 1989, and that those who claim to be Mauritanian should return home, where the problem could be resolved "among Mauritaniens without foreign interference." Vall and Wade's joint communique commented extensively on regional and international issues. They said the African Union should continue to play "an essential role in Darfur," but they called for expanded cooperation with the UN. They supported the African Group's position on UN reform; they also highlighted their support for the new Human Rights Council. They affirmed their support for the Middle East Roadmap and called for a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. Turning to Iraq, Wade and Vall called for peace and national unity. Vall's visit contrasted sharply with Comoros President Assoumani Azali's four-day visit, which was long on pomp but reportedly short on substance. END SUMMARY.

WE HAVE NO REFUGEES IN SENEGAL

[1](#)2. (U) During a March 7 press conference, Colonel Vall rejected the existence of Mauritanian refugees in Senegal. He said those referred to as refugees are "groups of people" who have reasons of their own to settle in Senegal. He said thousands of Mauritaniens and Senegalese citizens cross the border back and forth on a daily basis, which, he argued, excludes the possibility of Mauritanian refugees in Senegal.

VALL MEETS A REFUGEE ASSOCIATION LEADER

[1](#)3. (U) On March 7, Vall met Mr. Toure, President of the Coordination of the Association of Mauritanian Refugees in Senegal and Mali. The meeting took place following a request that Toure made via the Mauritanian Embassy in Dakar, and via the connection he has established with the President of the Mauritanian Supreme Court. Vall asked Toure to think about instruments for resolution of the problem, but insisted that a solution was only conceivable inside Mauritania.

DISAPPOINTMENT

14. (SBU) Toure told us his talk with Vall had seemed to go well, and that he was therefore disappointed by what he saw as Vall's "radical statement" at the press conference. Toure added that his organization had showed good will to new Mauritanian authorities and had hoped to work in total discretion with Vall. Now, he would have to respond to Vall's denial of the presence of refugees with a public statement.

15. (U) Meanwhile, FLAM representatives in Dakar used the opportunity of Vall's visit to demonstrate. Police arrested five but released them later in the day.

BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

16. (U) The joint communique focused on bilateral, regional and international issues. The leaders highlighted cooperation on fisheries and transport projects. They also agreed on a Cooperation Committee meeting in Nouakchott during the first half of April. Each praised the other's efforts to promote democracy. They called for stronger African support for the Digital Solidarity Fund. They highlighted their concern about avian influenza and called for heightened surveillance.

17. (U) On regional and international issues, while saying that the African Union should continue to play "an essential role in Darfur," they called for expanded cooperation with the UN. They supported the African Group's position on UN reform. They also highlighted their support for the new Human Rights Council. They affirmed their support for the Middle East Roadmap and called for a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its

DAKAR 00000619 002 OF 002

capital. Turning to Iraq, Wade and Vall called for peace and national unity.

COMMENT

18. (SBU) Many in Senegal perceived Vall's visit as an opportunity to resume peaceful and cooperative links with Mauritania. Wade's recent visit to Nouakchott, followed by Vall's visit to Senegal, testifies to this effort. African-Mauritanians in Senegal at this point probably fear they will be sacrificed by Vall and Wade to avoid any open disagreements.

19. (SBU) Vall's visit contrasted sharply with Comoros President Assoumani Azali's March 2-6 visit, which was long on pomp but short on substance. The centerpiece of their discussions was apparently a decision to open an Embassy of the Comoros in Dakar to serve the 500 or more students and other citizens of the island nation who reside in Senegal. END COMMENT.

JACKSON